

Dearest Alex, Dave, Eddie and Michael,

We thought it might be a nice idea to write to you and try to explain why we devoted an entire album to covering your incredible songs. It was not a decision that we took lightly, but something we mulled over for several months. Being that this is the second volume of "Interpreting The Masters" we wanted to make sure that we chose a band or artist that would satisfy all the same criteria that our choice for volume one did. We are great lovers of all kinds of music, so the genre of music was not part of our decision. Our decision was based more on musicianship, songwriting and why or how some music just becomes part of the fabric of our culture. It all sounds so much loftier than it should, but we really took great care in choosing Van Halen.

Van Halen is a band that met all of the benchmarks for this project. You have such an array of incredibly crafted songs that are insanely listenable. There's an undeniable chemistry within the band, which has translated into fans and admirers all over the world. And of course, something that must be said, the ability and musicianship of all the members of Van Halen is undeniable.

We realize a large portion of the band's discography is not represented on our album. And the reason is simply that we felt strongly about exploring the songs that were imprinted on our minds as kids. Van Halen loomed so large for both of us in those formative years. Those songs are forever embedded, in that way that can only happen when you're young and you don't have anything else you need to do but listen to "Unchained" over and over and over again.

So once we chose Van Halen as the subject of our "Interpreting The Masters: Volume II", we made some critical choices. For example, we didn't even want to try to imitate Eddie's guitar playing. How could anyone even scratch the surface of his virtuosity? So Greg did his best to reinterpret Eddie's guitar parts with his own piano and keyboard playing and, in many instances, gave a nod to classical and jazz music, which we believe is something that also inspired you all.

We also wanted to make sure that we paid our respects to the structure and the essence of the songs. We know that our interpretations must sound very different to you, and most anyone. But we were always conscious of making sure that we tried to respect the heart of the song.

Having a female vocalist definitely changes the songs quite a bit. And David Lee Roth is also someone who you should never try to imitate. Inara is a very different kind of singer but she really tried to capture the inflections, the nuances and hopefully extracted a morsel of Dave's genius into her own performance.

In keeping with the extraordinary level of musicianship from all of you, we enlisted players of the highest caliber to be a part of the album in addition to all of Greg's playing and Inara's vocals. And Greg produced the album with such care and attention to detail. We did all of this with the intention of paying the utmost respect to you all and your accomplishments.

This album was such a fun and joyful experience for both of us. We can only imagine what it must've been like to write and record and perform these songs in the heat of inspiration. Or what it must've been like that first moment when you all knew that what you were making was something powerful. Did you know what was going to happen? Did you realize the impact that you all would have on the world and all the bands that would come after you who were endlessly inspired by your music?

Thank you! Thank you for the music. And thank you for teaching how us how to rock!

Respectfully,

The Bird And The Bee(Greg & Inara)

Inara George  
Greg Gant